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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/688,036	10/16/2003	Stan A. Brown	5576.1 413471/021	2533

7590 08/10/2004

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EXAMINER

ALIMENTI, SUSAN C

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

3644

DATE MAILED: 08/10/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/688,036

Applicant(s)

BROWN ET AL.

Examiner

Susan C. Alimenti

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 16 October 2003.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 39-45 and 51-57 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 55-57 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 39-45 and 51-52 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 53 and 54 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

1. Restriction to one of the following inventions is required under 35 U.S.C. 121:
 - I. Claims 39-45 & 51-54, drawn to a milk flow device/system, classified in class 119, subclass 14.15.
 - II. Claims 55-57, drawn to milk flow meter, classified in class 119, subclass 14.55.

2. The inventions are distinct, each from the other because of the following reasons:

Inventions I and II are related as combination and subcombination. Inventions in this relationship are distinct if it can be shown that (1) the combination as claimed does not require the particulars of the subcombination as claimed for patentability, and (2) that the subcombination has utility by itself or in other combinations (MPEP § 806.05(c)). In the instant case, the combination as claimed does not require the particulars of the subcombination as claimed because invention II does not claim the sensors that are claimed in invention I. The subcombination has separate utility such as a flow meter for another type of fluid flow application, such as juice flow in a bottling factory situation.

Because these inventions are distinct for the reasons given above and have acquired a separate status in the art as shown by their different classification, restriction for examination purposes as indicated is proper.

3. During a telephone conversation with Daniel Meaney, Jr. on 3 August 2004 a provisional election was made without traverse to prosecute the invention of group I, claims 39-45 & 51-54. Affirmation of this election must be made by applicant in replying to this Office action. Claims

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55-57 are withdrawn from further consideration by the examiner, 37 CFR 1.142(b), as being drawn to a non-elected invention.

Applicant is reminded that upon the cancellation of claims to a non-elected invention, the inventorship must be amended in compliance with 37 CFR 1.48(b) if one or more of the currently named inventors is no longer an inventor of at least one claim remaining in the application. Any amendment of inventorship must be accompanied by a request under 37 CFR 1.48(b) and by the fee required under 37 CFR 1.17(i).

Claim Objections

Claim 39 is objected to because of the following informalities: In line 5, the phrase as to be enable gravity” should be corrected as it is in improper grammatical format. Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

4. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

5. Claims 39-45 and 51-52 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over van den Berg (US 5,792,964) and further in view of Kobayashi et al. (US 5,421,210).

Van den Berg discloses the claimed flow meter except it is not positively disclosed that the liquid flow level is less than the cross-sectional diameter of the conduit containing the flow

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meter. Van den Berg's milking system has a milk flow device 10 positioned between a milk claw and a pipeline for transporting and measuring the properties of the flow, comprising first and second sensors defined as elements 12, Figure 2, and a third sensor 15 for measuring conductivity. The first and second sensors 12 determine the flow rate by finding the cross-sectional area of the milk flow and then determining how much milk passes the space in between the two sensors 12 in a certain time period (van den Berg, col.4, lns.5-16). Van den Berg does not discuss the height or level of flow through the conduit and thus does not specify how such a situation is handled by the flow device. Kabayashi discloses a milk flow meter, in the same field of invention, having the capability to measure the flow rate of a fluid passing through said meter even when a varying liquid level. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to utilize Kobayashi's sensor or electrode device in van den Berg's milking system to provide a flow meter that is more adept to measure fluid flowing at different levels in the conduit.

Regarding claims, 42-45, van den Berg shows the milk flow device 10 to be at an angle of inclination, (van den Berg, Figures 1 and 2) however it is not positively disclosed what that angle is. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to alter the angle between 25-35 degrees, encompassing 10-80 degrees, since it has been held that where the general conditions of a claim are disclosed in the prior art, discovering the optimum or workable ranges involves only routine skill in the art. *In re Aller*, 105 USPQ 233.

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Allowable Subject Matter

6. Claim 53-54 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

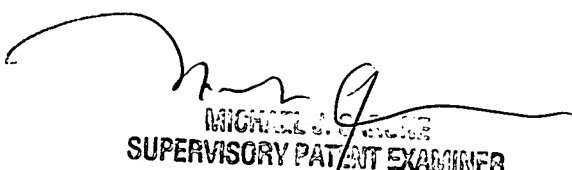
Conclusion

7. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Susan C. Alimenti whose telephone number is 703-306-0360. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Michael J. Carone can be reached on 703-306-4198. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

8. Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

SCA


MICHAEL J. CARONE
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER